Amendments to the Claims

1. (Currently amended) A transgenic plant comprising a plant transformation vector comprising a nucleotide sequence that encodes or is complementary to a sequence that encodes a DRO2 polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence having at least 95% sequence identity to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, ~~or an ortholog thereof,~~ wherein said transgenic plant has increased drought tolerance to control plants.

2. (Currently amended) The transgenic plant of Claim 1 wherein the transformation vector comprises a constitutive promoter that controls expression of the DRO2 polypeptide ~~or ortholog~~.

3. (Currently amended) A method of producing increased drought tolerance in a plant, said method comprising:

a) introducing into plant ~~progenitor~~ cells ~~of the plant~~ a plant transformation vector comprising a nucleotide sequence that encodes or is complementary to a sequence that encodes a DRO2 polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence having at least 95% sequence identity to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 to produce transformed cells, ~~or an ortholog thereof,~~ and

b) growing the transformed ~~progenitor~~ cells to produce a transgenic plant, wherein said ~~poly~~nucleotide sequence is expressed, and said transgenic plant exhibits increased drought tolerance as compared to a non-modified plant.

4. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 3 wherein a DRO2 polypeptide is over-expressed in the transgenic plant as compared to a non-modified plant.

5. (Original) A plant obtained by a method of Claim 3.

6. (Currently amended) A recombinant plant part obtained from a plant according to Claim 5.

7. (New) A method of producing increased drought tolerance in a plant, said method comprising:

a) introducing into plant cells a plant transformation vector comprising a nucleotide sequence that encodes or is complementary to a sequence that encodes a DRO2 polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 to produce transformed cells, and

b) growing the transformed cells to produce a transgenic plant, wherein said nucleotide sequence is expressed, and said transgenic plant exhibits increased drought tolerance as compared to a non-modified plant.

8. (New) The method of Claim 7 wherein a DRO2 polypeptide is over-expressed in the transgenic plant as compared to a non-modified plant.

9. (New) A transgenic plant produced by the method of Claim 7.

10. (New) The transgenic plant of Claim 9 wherein the transformation vector comprises a constitutive promoter that controls expression of the DRO2 polypeptide.

11. (New) A recombinant plant part obtained from a plant according to Claim 9.